



F-35 Lightning II Program

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HILL SELECTED TO RECEIVE FIRST OPERATIONAL F-35A AIRCRAFT

75th Air Base Wing Public Affairs

HILL AIR FORCE BASE, Utah- Hill Air Force Base was selected as the new home for the Air Force's first operational F-35A Lightning IIs.

Air Force officials chose Hill AFB after a lengthy analysis of multiple locations' operational considerations, installation attributes, economic, and environmental factors.

"Hill AFB is ideally suited to assure a successful path to Initial Operational Capability," said Timothy Bridges, Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Air Force for Installations. "The nearby Utah Test and Training Range provides access to one of the largest and most diverse airspace and range complexes in the Air Force. Access to high-quality airspace and ranges is essential for the first operational F-35A wing."

The decision culminates a nearly four year process that included an extensive Environmental Impact Statement that examined impacts on such factors as air quality, noise, land use and socioeconomics.

Hill AFB is also home to the F-35 depot, which provides fleet maintenance support, a key factor to the long term sustainment and readiness of the F-35A fleet.

Another strength of Hill AFB is the already established classic association between the 388th Fighter Wing (active duty) and the 419th Fighter Wing (reserve). This Total Force Integrated unit is capable of providing accelerated seasoning of new personnel to maximize the F-35A's advanced capabilities.

"This is great news for Hill AFB and we welcome the addition of the Air Force's newest, next-generation fighter aircraft," said Col. Lance Landrum, 388th Fighter Wing commander. "The F-35 is critical to ensuring our dominance over the battlefield in today and tomorrow's advanced threat environment. Hill is the perfect place for this weapons system given the nearby Utah Test and Training Range, our existing infrastructure, and continued support from the local community. We look forward to paving the way for its arrival."

"Flying F-35s alongside our active duty counterparts is a great example of the Air Force's 'Total Force' vision, which seeks to increase capability from new technology while leveraging the experience, stability, continuity and cost effectiveness of our Reserve personnel," said Col. Bryan Radliff, 419th Fighter Wing commander.

"Today's announcement that the fighter wings will host operational beddown of the F-35 Lightning II is certainly great news for Team Hill and the state of Utah," said Col. Kathryn Kolbe, 75th Air Base Wing commander. "Selecting Hill to host America's newest fifth generation fighter is a tribute to the 388th and 419th Fighter Wings' rich heritage. It is fitting the 388th Fighter Wing become the first fully operational F-35 unit, just as it was with the F-16 in January 1979. The selection to place it here speaks volumes to the viability of Team Hill's commitment to our nation's security."

Construction on base to prepare for the aircraft is expected to start almost immediately in order to be ready to accept the first F-35As, which are scheduled to arrive in 2015. The base is projected to receive 72 F-35As, replacing the 48 F-16 Fighting Falcons currently assigned to Hill.

The F-35A, manufactured by Lockheed Martin, is a fifth-generation fighter aircraft intended to be the Air Force's premier strike aircraft through the first half of the 21st Century. It is a multirole fighter that is expected to eventually replace the service's F-16 and A-10 fleets.